

# Department of Auditor-Controller Children's Group Home Ombudsman Activity Report

## September 2014

Total Calls	16	General Statistics	
		Youth Callers	Time of Youth Calls
Calls returned within one business day	16	Female	9
Calls resolved within 30 business days	16	Male	4
Follow-up calls from hotline	36		
Follow-up calls from visits	15	Total Youth Callers	13
		Total Adult Callers	3

### CALLS RELATING TO:

#### Collaboration Contacts/Referrals/Information

DCFS -Social Workers	6
Community Care Licensing	1
Group Home Providers	4
Probation Ombudsman	3
Attorney	1
General Information	3
Department of Mental Health	1
DCFS - Out-of-Home Care Manager	2

TOTAL: 21 (Note: A call may have multiple contacts/referrals)

#### Personal Rights

Allowance	Health/Med, Dental, Psych Care
Clothing	2
Contact	Respect (Dream Home Care; Careprovider)
Food	School/Community/Religious Svcs
Living Condition	Work/Job Skills

TOTAL: 2

#### Personal

Crime/Gang-related	Physical Abuse/Harm
Discipline	Fear, Threats, Intimidation, Isolation
Discrimination	Relationship
Emotional Issues	Sexual Interaction
Pregnancy/Infant Care	Substance Abuse
	1
	Neglect (Dimondale Lancaster - Probation Youth)

TOTAL: 1

#### Other

1	Placement (David & Margaret)	1	Self Harm (Vista Del Mar)
1	Attorney Contact/Court Date (Children Are Our Future)	1	Privacy (Murrell's)

TOTAL: 4

#### Visits/Outreach

Penny Lane Centers - 11 sites (Joint visit with Probation Ombudsman)  
Aviva Center (Joint visit with Probation Ombudsman) - 1 site

TOTAL: 12 sites

**SYBIL BRAND COMMISSION MEETING**  
**October 15, 2014**  
**Reporting for the month of September 2014**

**AWOLs:** There were **108** AWOLs involving **99** youth: **9** youth AWOLED more than once in this same month.

<b>42</b> remain AWOL	<b>1</b> HOME
<b>35</b> returned to GH	<b>6</b> CCP
<b>14</b> are in JH	<b>1</b> Terminated

**Outstanding AWOL detainments from previous months and arrests in September 2014:**

**11** youth were arrested / detained in September who had AWOLED in previous months. **5** are currently in JH, **5** are in a GH, **1** is in Camp, and **0** were placed HOP.

**Statistics and Findings regarding AWOLs in September:**

- 1) 43% of the AWOL incidents were Hispanic males with a mean age of 15.9 years. The second largest population (19%) of AWOLED youth during the month of September was Hispanic females with a mean age of 15.8 years. Black males and females accounted for 18% and 14% respectively. The overall average age of youth who AWOLED in September was 16.0 years.

*Recommendation:*

- Hispanic males have continued to represent the largest number of AWOL incidents for the past 25 months. The reason for the large number of Hispanic male AWOLs may likely be a representation of the general population of LA County. Even if that is a fact, it still means this is the population that Probation needs to work with to decrease AWOLs. DPOs, Therapists, or other GH and County staff, should interview at-risk youth (mainly Hispanic males around the age of 16) to find out about certain feelings related to age, gender, or cultural stresses and consider possible solutions to decrease these feelings/stresses.
  - Make DPOs and GH staff aware of the demographics that are at most risk of AWOLing. Research and identify possible methods or daily practices of assisting youth to come to a less stressful state of mind.
- 2) The sooner the GH notifies Probation staff of the AWOL, the faster Probation can begin the steps necessary to detain the youth. For the month of September, five (3) of the GHs were non-compliant with notifying Probation about the AWOLED youth within the required time frame.

*Recommendation:*

- During the month of September all of GH's reported the AWOLs on time. However, 3 of the 4 Relative / Non-Relative Placements reported after the required time.
  - Reiterate to GH staff and to legal guardians of youth the importance of reporting an AWOL as soon as the incident occurs. Specifically, all AWOLs should be reported within 24 hours in order to expedite the issuance of a bench warrant and the recovery of the youth. Statistics should be shared with GH staff to illustrate the real results of delayed reporting.
- 3) As with previous months, certain GHs showed a higher percentage of AWOLs than other GHs. This was determined by taking the number of AWOLs for that month and comparing it to the number of beds available in the GH (population). It is important to note that youth who AWOLED more than once in the same GH were only counted as 1 AWOL. For September 2014, 9 GHs had a 30% or higher AWOL rate which is higher than the previous month (4).

*Recommendation:*

- Continue to track the frequency of AWOLs for each GH and see if a consistent pattern remains amongst the same group homes. At this point, certain GHs have shown to have a consistently high number of AWOLs.
  - Several confounding factors have to be controlled to identify a direct correlation between GH treatment of youth and AWOLs. For example, a high AWOL rate for a GH could only mean that that particular GH gets higher risk youth.
  - Investigate GHs that have an unusually high number of AWOLs compared to other GHs to see possible reasons.
  - Interview youth during investigation.
  - Create a plan of action based on results (directives for GH, staff training, etc).
  - Monitor GH to see if trend has stopped after implementation of programs or directives.
- 4) During the month of September, there was a positive correlation detected between bench warrant requests and timely bench warrant issuance and effect on youth detainment. As in, the longer time it took to issue the bench warrant, the less likely it was for the youth to be detained that same month:

*Recommendation:*

- Regardless of strong or weak correlations, consider the importance of having a bench warrant issued as soon as possible for an AWOLED youth. Overall, the sooner a bench warrant is issued, the more likely it is that the youth will be detained by the end of the month (as several previous months' data has shown).

**Final Remarks on AWOLs:** Similar to last month, all 'insignificant' AWOLs were also incorporated into the data this month (i.e. youth AWOLing for an hour). Certain trends relating to race, age, and sex continued to mirror the previous months' data.



### iTrack (SIRs)-

There were **0** child deaths and **1** suicide attempt reported for the month of September 2014 in the iTrack automated reporting system.

#### **Suicide Attempt:**

**VISTA DEL MAR CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES-SPECIAL CARE** – While GH staff was gathering supplies to clean superficial wounds the youth inflicted on herself, the youth allegedly drank Hydrogen Peroxide 3% when staff turned their back to get some bandages. 911 were called and the youth was transported Brotman Medical center emergency room and was placed on a Mental Health (5150) hold. The youth informed the GH staff, paramedics, and hospital staff that she was lying and did not ingest any peroxide.

For the month of September, the "Other" category for SIRs has dropped to the third largest category for the first time in many months.

#### *Recommendation:*

- Continue to instruct all iTrack users to NOT select the category "other," unless incident undeniably does not belong under any specific category. Another option is to remove the category "other," and instead add additional specific categories (once it is determined why users are selecting "other"). Probation is currently discussing improvement ideas regarding iTrack with ISD software managers.
- Probation is currently tracking all iTrack incident reports, specifically those listed as other, and will continue to provide the information to all GH's and instruct them to refrain from using the "other" category unless absolutely necessary. It seems like this dialogue maybe the reason the number of incident reports listed as "other" decreased for the month of September. This will likely continue to decrease the frequency of over utilizing the "other" category; it may also provide the GH's an opportunity to retrain the staff members that continuously select the "other" category instead of properly categorizing the incidents.

### **GROUP HOME MONITORING AND INVESTIGATIONS:**

Children Are Our Future Group Home (all sites) were place on an Investigative Hold status on September 6, 2014. A Corrective Action Plan meeting was held and the Hold status was lifted as of September 1, 2014.

#### **Child Abuse:**

We had **8** referrals for the month of September 2014. **3** were **Unfounded**, **2** are **Inconclusive**, and **3** are **Pending**.

**Vista Del Mar** – Youth alleged that a male staff pushed him, got on top of him, forced his knee into the youth's lower abdomen and pressed his forearm against the youth's neck. The allegation was **Unfounded**.

**Children Are Our Future (Legg House)** - Alleged Sexual Abuse and General Neglect: Youth disclosed that a female staff would expose herself by not wearing underwear and would open her legs and "play with herself" in front of the youth. Youth also alleged that

a different female staff was having sex with one of the youth placed at the Group Home. The allegation was **Unfounded**.

**David & Margaret** - General Neglect Allegation: Reporting party alleged that the GH is late picking up the youth on a daily basis and the GH did not provide the youth with any breakfast due to blood work appointment. The allegation was **Unfounded**.

**Leroy Haynes** - General Neglect, for alleged staff failure to intervene. Three youth were involved in a physical altercation and it does not appear that staff did anything but verbal redirection. The allegations are **Inconclusive**

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**Children Are Our Future (Saticoy House)** - General Neglect: A neighbor made a complaint to CCL, who in turn called in a SCAR, alleging that the youth are not being supervised at the GH. The neighbor reported that the girls are "rowdy, rude, dress inappropriately, smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol, use drugs, play loud music . . . all outside in the backyard. Additionally, the neighbor reported that males hide in the bushes and wait for the girls to sneak out their windows. There is alcohol and drug paraphernalia, including condoms that are thrown in the neighbor's backyard. Neighbor stated the youth use cocaine and marijuana and all this occurs on the weekends around 11:00 PM. The allegations are **Pending**.

**New Beginnings** - General Neglect: A SB City youth alleged that she was being bullied by other youth in the GH and did not feel safe. SCAR was generated due to two Probation youth placed in the same GH. The allegation is **Pending**.

**Children Are Our Future (Harvey House)** - General Neglect: A DCFS youth alleged that there is drug use and fighting going on in the home. In addition, the GH is un-kept and spider webs are at the entrance of the home. The allegation is **Pending**.

### **Group Home Investigations:**

We had **10** Group Home investigations during the month of September 2014. **4** that were **Unfounded**, **1** has been **Substantiated**, and **5** are **Pending**. There were **3** Follow-up investigations; **2** have been **Substantiated**, and **1** is **Inconclusive**.

### **Full Investigations:**

**Children Are Our Future (Chatsworth)** - During an outing, two youth went to a nearby store and stole alcohol with staff following them. The youth then drank the alcohol and could not take their evening meds as a result. The allegation was **Unfounded**.

**Phoenix House** - Youth alleged to a Juvenile Hall IDC officer that he went AWOL due to a staff that hit him. The allegation was **Unfounded**.

**Guiding Light II** – DPO Lim went to an interagency meeting in the Inland Empire at which time Guiding Light GH issues were brought up that included: lack of food, transportation concerns, and an unauthorized person has been transporting the youth. Other safety issues, such as, the GH van is not properly working, including the seatbelts not clicking into place. Also, there is not enough staff to transport residents to ILP classes. The allegation was **Unfounded**.



**Loving Life (Compton)** – A Minute Order was received from Department 203, dated 9-4-14, ordering Probation to investigate Loving Life: "Probation is ordered to investigate Loving Life placement". No allegations noted. The allegation is **Unfounded**.

**Phoenix House** - Medication Issue: Youth Jose Lopez (private client) had cheeked his medication and crushed it to snort with youth Pena. Undetermined what type of "medication" was crushed and snorted. The allegation is **Substantiated**.

**Delilu** – Court (Department S30) ordered an investigation regarding a Child Abuse allegation for General Neglect. The allegation is **Pending**.

**Girls Republic** - Medication Issue: Youth was able to "cheek" her psychotropic medication on three separate occasions and split it with another youth. The allegation is **Pending**.

**Boys Republic** - Compliance Violation: Youth's mother alleged that the GH failed to take her son back after he went AWOL, after they told her to bring him back to the facility. The allegation is **Pending**.

**Rosemary Children's Service (Bonnie House)** - Sexual Incident: It was alleged that an unidentified male was in the youth's bedroom engaging in sexual activity. The allegation is **Pending**.

**Children Are Our Future (Chatsworth)** - Neighbor as made another complaint against this GH, one of many in the past. Neighbor alleged that the GH left the sprinklers on for 24 hrs. and it flooded his yard. Additionally, the youth at the GH have been throwing lemons in his pool and is concerned that they could hit himself, his dog or girlfriend. Neighbor claims that there is no supervision at the GH. The allegation is **Pending**.

#### **Follow-up:**

**Trinity (Apple Valley)** – Medication Issue: Youth was mistakenly given another youth's psychotropic medication. The allegation was **Substantiated**.

**Leroy Haynes** - Group Home failed to report an incident in a timely manner to the i-Track reporting system and the PPQA OD Line. The allegation was **Substantiated**.

**Children Are Our Future (Chatsworth)** – Youth became intoxicated at Tarzana Treatment Center . . . Looking into supervision issues at the Center (although not our jurisdiction) and Group Home issues on why they waited to take him to the ER. The allegation was **Inconclusive**.

#### **Monitoring:**

The 2013-2014, fiscal year is completed. The remaining reports not posted to the Probation website are in the final stages of the approval process and will be posted soon. The 2014-2015, fiscal year is in progress.

#### **Permanency:**

We are in various stages of preparation for **2 adoptions** and **6 legal guardianships** and **5 possible legal guardianships**.

In September 2014, we completed 0 Adoptions and 0 Legal Guardianships